



Chambers's Journal

SIXTH SERIES.

MR BRAITHWAITE'S PERPLEXITY.

By Mrs HAMILTON SYNGE.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

MR BRAITHWAITE sat in his study composing his sermon. Surrounded by commentaries and Fathers of the Church, he was conscientiously striving to produce five-and-twenty minutes of instructive and original matter without undue reference to these mental props.

The life of a country clergyman is not, as a rule, exciting. It may often be somewhat monotonous. But it has its alleviations. For the last day of the week it grants an immunity from domestic or other disturbances which is quite unparalleled in other professions. 'The Rector is writing his sermon, and cannot be disturbed,' is generally lived up to by each member of a clergyman's household.

In the present case this period of repose was appreciated to the full. Mr Braithwaite rarely quitted the seclusion of his study from morning until dinner, except for some particular, urgent matter.

He sat most of the day dreaming in his chair—a way he had fallen into of late years. It made a change from the six days of bustling activity within the house, and the constant succession of sick persons, naughty choir-boys, and requisitioning parishioners without. Sometimes he took down his favourite books, and, surrounding himself with them, read from one and another in a desultory manner. But more often he would stroll up and down the room, pausing every now and then to gaze fondly at the coral-pink begonias, the pyrethrums, and the Madonna lilies which adorned the beds in front of his windows.

The Rector loved his flowers. His tenderness for them was one of the few natural and spontaneous elements remaining in the incrustation of long-enforced habit with which his real self was enclosed. The enchantment of their growth, their

smell, their colours, was the one form of sensuous enjoyment left to him. He was always happy amongst them, and while in their company he forgot his years, his careful asceticism of conduct, his self-contained reserve, and became as light-hearted as a child.

For five-and-thirty years the Rector had done his duty in the position of life in which he had been placed. He was orthodox, he was upright. His domestic life, though tempered by considerable trial, was without reproach.

The Rector had faced the inevitable.

When he discovered he had married a narrow-minded and tyrannical woman with only one point in view—her own—he had seen what his course must be. It was a case of fighting—wearily and incessant fighting, or surrender; and he had chosen the latter course. He was not very young and he was not very strong; he loved peace and quiet and goodwill, and hated wranglings and disputes. And so he procured immunity from these vexations by the withdrawal of himself from all subjects of disagreement. As far as was possible, he waived every doubtful question. It was not exactly the craven attitude of giving in, but it was avoiding all possibility of having to do so.

Not for one moment, however, was the Rector self-deceived. He knew he was a coward. He knew he had chosen the unworthy part. But he did not flinch when he surveyed himself from the outside. If he had bought his peace and paid a heavy price, that was his affair.

That the price was heavy he was fully aware. But it was not for himself that it weighed upon him, that each year that passed made him feel uncomfortable misgivings and regrets. It was as a father that the Rector's conscience rose up against him and disturbed his serenity of soul.

He was fond of his two daughters. He always treated them with kindness and politeness, and tried to gratify those of their requests which

managed to reach him unextinguished by the way. His second marriage had been more or less on their account—to supply an understanding supervision to all those matters in the elevation of the young, with which only a woman can deal.

The supervision had not been by any means after his mind; but he had never interfered. He had ignored. He had let things alone.

But that he had done so weighed upon him continually of late years; and though he said to himself that any other course was impossible, yet he was chafingly conscious that he was not released from the obligation of endeavour.

Kitty at present was only a child; but Maggie was nearly grown up, and her presence was becoming more and more a disturbing element in that condition of unruffled calm with which he strove to surround himself.

He knew so little about her. He had never tried to understand children's ways. He felt it might land him in difficulties, and so had stood on one side. But now that she had passed from childhood, her presence weighed upon him with a sense of obligation unfulfilled. He felt uncomfortable before her criticising, questioning brown eyes. Out of his set and measured existence, where each duty was mechanically performed, and where all disturbing questions were held ruthlessly at bay, what had he to offer her?

Thoughts such as these fluttered through his mind this Saturday afternoon. He could hardly give his attention to his sermon.

'Oh, hypocrite of hypocrites!' he seemed to read between the lines, 'what right have you to preach of duties rightly performed—you who neglect your own?'

Several times he put away his work. It seemed as if it almost refused to come into shape. He tried to cajole himself into serenity by sketching in his mind a system of reform, a fresh line of conduct, different modes of paternal solicitude, of the bestowal of advice. How often he had done it before! How often failed! He got up at last and went to the window. The rain-clouds of the morning had all passed away, and the sun flooded everything in a delicious glow. The flowers with their sweetness and colour, the songs of the birds, the hum of the pollen-laden bees, seemed soothing voices to his spirit. He longed to break through his rule and slip out amongst them. He only feared being seen. Mrs Braithwaite appeared to be composed of ears and eyes. She would find him out and ask him what the 'subject' was, and whether he had finished, and if the library windows might be cleaned.

Then, suddenly, as he stood irresolute, there came a knock at the door.

'Father, may I come in?' a young voice was heard to say, and, without waiting for an answer, his daughter Maggie came up to him and stood by his side.

'I'm busy,' died away upon Mr Braithwaite's

lips. He gathered up a pile of papers which lay beneath his hand, and placed upon them a letter-weight. Then he sat down in his chair.

'What is it, my dear?' he said in a slightly constrained manner. 'If it is not important I should prefer'—

'It is very important,' interrupted his daughter. 'Mayn't I speak to you now?'

'Certainly, dear,' said the Rector cheerfully. He had suddenly remembered—here was an opportunity! He tried to marshal in his mind the many things he had just been thinking out. He knitted his brows.

'I want to ask you something, father. You see, I have no real mother to ask; you are the proper person, are you not?'

'Yes, I believe so,' said the Rector somewhat timidly. 'Is it your allowance? Perhaps I can'—

'No, thank you, father, it's not that at all. It's advice. I want to know something. I have been reading a book where a girl always goes to her father for advice, and so everything ends well. I'm going to begin—to come and ask you things. The "step" is no good at all.'

'Yes,' said her father tentatively. He felt surprised. He felt that his knowledge of human nature was singularly small. Maggie had not been in the habit of coming to him for advice; and just through the chance suggestion of some ill-written novel, no doubt, she was entering upon a new course of action as easily as if she had done it all her days.

'I've been thinking it over,' continued the girl confidently. 'Though you don't talk to us much, and always leave the "step" to decide everything, I really believe you—you take our part sometimes. I can see it in your eyes.'

The Rector stared at her, amazed. This young unformed thing had reached the heart of the situation, had laid bare, in her simple matter-of-fact manner, the burden of his soul.

'Kitty is rather afraid of you,' went on Maggie after a moment's pause. 'She says you are not at all the sort of father she would choose. But, then, you could not understand a tom-boy like Kitty. You never were one yourself, I'm quite sure. But I'm not afraid of you at all. I'm going to be just the sort of daughter Eveline was—the girl in the story, you know. It would feel so nice and cosy and comfortable.'

The Rector was touched. He went so far as to lay his hand for an instant upon her arm. He looked at her in a new and interested way. As he did so he felt a pang. He noticed as he had never done before how like her dead mother she was growing. The great and overwhelming sorrow of his life, instead of peacefully fading away, seemed once more to hover over him. He could hardly bear to see her, and turned his eyes away.

'What is it you want to ask me, dear?' he

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said at length, as he brought his thoughts back from the long-past years.

'Well—it's something I want to find out. Kitty thinks you wouldn't know anything about it at all; but I'm not so sure of that.'

'What is it, dear?' said the Rector, with a smile. He felt amused.

'Well, father, I want to know'—She hesitated for a moment, then went on. 'Did you ever—ever *love* anybody?'

The Rector stared blankly into the young face before him, with its frank, questioning eyes.

'My dear child, what do you mean?' he exclaimed in a more astonished voice than he had used for many years. 'I hope I am not wanting in that Christian charity which'—

'Don't, please, father! It sounds like the congregation. I don't mean that sort of—dull sort of thing. Can't you tell me—just between ourselves—were you ever *in love*?'

The last words were whispered close to his ear. She had knelt down by his side and leaned up against the arm of his chair.

The Rector gasped. He glanced at the girl's half-turned-away head, and then at the open window. He felt a sudden longing to escape. Then he felt annoyed with himself at wishing to do so. He passed his hand over his brow and did not reply.

'I suppose you were in love once,' said Maggie helpfully. 'With my mother, I suppose?'

She looked up at him in a pretty, affectionate manner. 'How does it *feel*?—that's what I want to know.'

'You are very like—her,' he stammered at length. His hands grasped the polished oak arms

of the chair, and his eyes looked out of the window into the far away.

'Yes?' The word was spoken encouragingly.

Suddenly he turned and looked at her with his deep-set gray eyes.

'What do you want to know for?' he said in a strenuously calm voice. 'You are only a little girl.'

She flushed, and looked down upon the floor. 'I only wanted to know—so as to know,' she faltered; 'and—I am past seventeen.'

But the Rector did not seem to hear. He had risen from his seat. His eyes gazed straight in front of him, out of the window, over the village and the valley and the tops of the trees.

'What—does—it—feel like?' he muttered. His voice had a curious, broken sound. 'What is it like?' he repeated, below his breath, so that she could hardly hear. 'When—it's taken away—like *hell*.'

The girl shrank back. She crouched down, almost hiding herself behind the chair. She was frightened. She had never seen him so moved before. He, who was so collected and so calm, and who disliked any emotional display.

There was silence for a minute. The clock ticked noisily from the mantelpiece. A sharply defined clattering of plates came from the kitchen. Then he spoke.

'My dear,' he said in his usual measured tones, 'I think the begonias must be watered this evening; hardly any rain fell. I believe Matthews is very busy to-day.'

'All right, father; I will go and do it at once,' she answered; and, without looking in his direction, she hurried out of the room.

A GREAT EDITOR: JOHN BLACKWOOD.



TO judge by the booksellers' advertisements in the papers, everybody nowadays writes novels and gets them into print. Yet the relations between writer and publisher, between editor and contributor, have still a mysterious fascination for the general public. People like to hear how this great author made his first bow to the reading world, or how that one made a 'plum' (as our forebears would have called it) out of some work at which half-a-dozen members of 'the trade' had turned up a disdainful nose or wagged a dubious head. Publishing, one imagines, must be a profession compared to which an unknown gold-mine in Timbuctoo ranks as a 'gilt-edged' investment. If you make a hit, it is probably a very big one; but the misses! It is always best, however, to look upon the bright side of things, if possible; and in the volume on John Blackwood which his daughter, Mrs Gerald Porter, has just brought out (William Blackwood & Sons:

Edinburgh and London, 1898), and which, in the meantime, completes the 'Annals of the House,' it is not the gloomy aspect of the business which rises to view. Here we see a man, with an hereditary genius for publishing, enjoying the confidence and respect of the most eminent literary characters of his time, and conducting an undertaking of no little magnitude with conspicuous tact, shrewdness, and success.

No one, perhaps, could have handled George Eliot as he did. At the very beginning of their connection, before the new writer's sex and identity had been disclosed, he had been warned by Mr Lewes what a sensitive creature he had to deal with. 'He is so easily discouraged, so diffident of himself, that, not being prompted by necessity to write, he will close the series in the belief that his writing is not relished.' It is plain to see how her genius expanded under the sunshine of Mr Blackwood's encouragement. One feels in reading the publisher's letters to her how genuine and sincere his praise

was. There is a manly, earnest tone about his eulogy which must have been exquisitely gratifying to a nature that never got over an almost morbid craving for the sympathy and appreciation of others. Not that George Eliot undervalued the more palpable rewards of her efforts. Those who have read her biography may recall the keen business instinct she displayed, and how she was perpetually apprehensive lest her latest book should not be pushed with sufficient vigour. 'I certainly care a great deal for the money,' she confesses in a letter to her publisher, 'as I suppose all anxious minds do that love independence and have been brought up to think debt and begging the two deepest dishonours short of crime.' She had assuredly nothing to complain of in Mr Blackwood's transactions with her. He was ever liberal and considerate; and when, tempted by the offer of an exceptionally large sum of money, she deserted George Street for the nonce and carried *Romola* to another market, he wrote her a letter which for good sense and good feeling would be difficult to match. 'Rest assured,' he says, 'that I feel fully satisfied of the extreme reluctance with which you would decide upon leaving your old friend for any other publishers, however great the pecuniary consideration might be; and it would destroy my pleasure in business if I knew any friend was publishing with me when he could, or thought he could, do better for himself by going elsewhere.' It is impossible to doubt the sincerity of a sentiment which, proceeding from another pen, might have seemed unreal and affected.

He enjoyed, as we have hinted, the friendship of almost all the literary giants of his generation. With Thackeray he was on the most intimate terms, and 'Thack.' was his guest when, having abandoned his Jeameses for good, he came to Edinburgh to lecture on the Georges. Lytton, a writer of unquestionable genius, though his reputation has suffered eclipse, was a close ally, and formed a valuable connecting-link with the world of politics. Professor Aytoun was an even closer associate. He lived not far from Blackwood, and many was the cigar smoked and many the glass of toddy drunk by the two in company while the author of the *Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers* struck out some brilliantly humorous idea for the next number of 'Maga.' With Samuel Warren, who must have had many better qualities than he is often credited with, he maintained a friendship which had begun in the previous generation. Kinglake was another of the band, the prospect of a visit to whom was one of the inducements to undertake the yearly jaunt to London. In Laurence Lockhart he possessed a contributor whose lightness of touch may well make story-tellers envious, and a friend whose wit and humour were inexhaustible. Mrs Porter has done well to reprint at length his *Voice from the Rhineland*, one of the happiest pieces, in its own peculiar vein and metre, that have been produced since Goldsmith wrote

The Haunch of Venison. Another Laurence—'Larry' Oliphant—was one more of the sworn Blackwood men; while the three brothers Hamley formed a trio to which a parallel would not be easy to find. Edward was beyond doubt the ablest of the group. His *Recent Confessions of an English Opium Eater* is as brilliant an experiment in parody as can easily be recalled, and electrified De Quincey. Trollope and Charles Lever, again, were a couple of writers with whom Mr Blackwood came constantly into contact both in a business and a social capacity. The extracts from Lever's letters and the account of his life at Trieste are among the most interesting portions of the book. There are pathos and, alas! truth in a remark he makes *à propos* of 'Tony Butler': 'What you say of a real love-story is good; but I can't forget that Thackeray said no old man must prate about Love. . . . As to writing about Love from memory, it is like counting over the bank-notes of a bank long broken; they remind you of money, it is true, but they're only wastepaper after all.'

When we have added to the foregoing enumeration the names of Lord Neaves, Captain Speke (of Nile celebrity), and Mrs Oliphant, we feel that we have given tolerably ample proof of the proposition with which we set out. But it must not be supposed that Mr Blackwood was in any sense a bookworm or a recluse, though, naturally, the greater part of his correspondence was with literary men and women. He loved to mingle with the world, and he was never happier than when entertaining a congenial circle either at his Edinburgh house or at Strathlyrum, near St Andrews, where he spent those summers of which his daughter gives us so brilliant and sympathetic a sketch. The great resort of golfers was much less thronged twenty or thirty years since than it is now. There was no need of a relief-course, and it was possible to have one's game in comfort. Among all the golfers of a period which saw Mr Gilbert Mitchell Innes, Dr Argyll Robertson, and the late Mr Robert Clark at their very best, there was no better match-player than John Blackwood. He had no pretensions to being a first-class player; but, as Lord Moncreiff justly says, 'he knew exactly the limits of his own powers; and he played to win the match and not for his own glory.' His putting was notoriously deadly, despite a style the reverse of orthodox or graceful. It was probably one of the happiest moments of his life when he was elected captain of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club; and he seems to have performed the duties of that office with all due punctuality and seriousness. What he has to say of 'Old Tom' is admirable, and will go straight to the heart of every one who knows the many excellences which adorn that king among professionals. How Mr Blackwood contrived to combine incessant golf and unwearying hospitality with attention to the business of his firm is a mystery, or would be to most men. But he was blessed with the fatal gift of mingling duty with pleasure

—fatal, we mean, to ordinary mortals, who, in admiring awe, vainly seek to imitate its fortunate possessors. He would linger long over the morning cigar, chatting to his family and guests. Only with a strong effort could he shut himself up in his business-room. But, once settled there, he indulged in no dawdling or delay; and a large pile of packets for the post at lunch-time would testify to an industrious and well-spent forenoon.

There was no part of his work to which he was more attached than the editing of the family *Magazine*, which passed under his control at the age of twenty-eight. Like Douglas Cook of the *Saturday Review*, and unlike Dickens (one of the greatest of editors), Lockhart, and Reeve, he wrote nothing himself, but confined himself to inspiration, suggestion, and amendment. As an editor he took broad views. He was always afraid of becoming 'groovy,' and he was desirous that his periodical should embrace all subjects that interest mankind. There was no innovation on the practice of anonymity during his reign. He despised those rival miscellanies which consisted of an incoherent farrago of articles signed by political or social celebrities. He held very strongly that the suitability of any subject for his purposes depended entirely upon the handling of it; and he often wrote in that sense to people who sent in lists of subjects for proposed papers. He did

not like to buy a pig in a poke. He always preferred to see his way well into a serial story before starting it on its career. 'Waiting uncertain each month gives me rather more hot water than I like in my monthly toddy,' he wrote to Lever, who confessed that he wrote, as he lived, from hand to mouth. Mr Blackwood's correspondence gives one some conception of the ceaseless vigilance—the unremitting superintendence which he exercised over his army of writers. He knew exactly what he wanted, and he had the knack of getting exactly what he wanted out of his contributors. He was always delighted with them in proportion to the quickness with which they caught his hints and gave effect to his suggestions. Of such stuff are great editors made. Mrs Porter, who can tell a good story with uncommon point and spirit, mentions an old Scotch gardener who, on meeting a fellow-countryman who had entered the Church of England, complacently remarked: 'Ou, ay: gairdeners or meenisters, ony kind of heid-wark, they maun aye come tae us.' When one thinks of the Murrays, the Blackwoods, the Macmillans, and many others, and when one remembers how the world of Fleet Street is peopled with Scots, one is driven to believe that, as regards some departments of the business of literature, the venerable worthy was not so very far wrong.

THE RED RAT'S DAUGHTER.

By GUY BOOTHBY.

CHAPTER VI.



HE dinner that evening must be counted a distinct success. Browne was the first to arrive, and it was not wonderful that he should have been, considering that he had spent the whole of his day waiting for

that moment. The owner of the restaurant received him personally.

'Well, Lallemand,' said Browne, with an anxiety that was almost ludicrous, 'how are your preparations? Is everything ready?'

'Certainly, monsieur,' Lallemand replied, spreading his hands apart. 'Everything is ready; Felix himself has done ze cooking, I have chosen ze wine, and your own gardener has arranged ze flowers. You have ze best men-servants in London to wait upon you. I have procured you four kinds of fruit that has never been seen in England before; and now I give you ze word of Lallemand zat you will have ze most perfect little dinner zat has ever been seen in ze city of London.'

'I am glad to hear it,' said Browne. 'I am exceedingly obliged to you for the trouble you have taken in the matter.'

'I beg you will not mention ze trouble, monsieur,' replied Lallemand politely. 'It is ze pleasure of my life to serve you.'

He had scarcely spoken before a cab drew up outside, and Jimmy Foote made his appearance, clad in immaculate evening-dress. He greeted Browne with a somewhat sheepish air, as if he were ashamed of himself for something, and did not quite know what that something was.

'Well, old man,' he said. 'Here I am, you see; up to time, I hope. How d'ye do, Lallemand?'

'I hope you are most well, Monsieur Foote,' replied Lallemand, with one of his inimitable bows.

'I am better than I shall be after your dinner,' Foote replied, with a smile. 'Human nature is weak. I am tempted, and I know that I shall succumb.'

Browne all this time was showing evident signs of impatience. He glanced repeatedly at his watch, and as seven o'clock drew near he imagined that every vehicle pulling up outside must contain the two ladies for whom he was waiting so eagerly. When at last they did arrive he hastened to the door to greet them. Madame Bernstein was the

first to alight, and Katherine Petrovitch followed her a moment later. She gave her hand to Browne, and as he took it such a thrill went through him that it was wonderful the young man did not collapse upon the pavement.

Having conducted them to the room in which they were to take off their wraps, Browne went in search of Foote, whom he found in the dining-room.

'Pull yourself together, old chap,' said Jimmy as he glanced at him; 'you are trembling like a leaf. What on earth is the matter with you? Take my advice and try a pick-me-up.'

'I wouldn't touch a drop for worlds,' said Browne, with righteous indignation. 'I wonder at your suggesting such a thing.'

Instead, he went to the table and moved a flower-vase which was an eighth of an inch from the centrepiece farther than its companion on the other side.

'This is as bad a case as I ever remember,' said Foote to himself; and at the same moment Katherine Petrovitch and Madame Bernstein entered the room. A somewhat painful surprise was in store for Browne. There could be no doubt about one thing: Madame Bernstein had dressed herself with due regard to the importance of the occasion. Her gown was of bright ruby velvet; her arms were entirely bare; and while her bodice was supported by the most slender of shoulder-straps, it was cut considerably lower than most people would have considered compatible with either her age or her somewhat portly personal appearance. Round her neck and studded in her hair she wore many diamonds, all so palpably false as to create no suspicion of any kind. Her companion's costume, on the other hand, was simplicity itself. She was attired in black, unrelieved by any touch of colour; a plain band of velvet encircled her throat, and Browne confessed to himself afterwards that he had never in his life seen anything more becoming. He presented Foote to the ladies with becoming ceremony; and when their places had been allotted them they sat down to dinner, madame on Browne's right, Katherine on his left.

Despite the knowledge that the dinner had been prepared by one of the most admirable *chefs* in the world, and the fact that Lallemand himself had given his assurance that everything was satisfactory, Browne was nevertheless considerably exercised in his mind lest something might go wrong. He might have spared himself the trouble, however, for the dinner was perfection itself. Only one thing troubled him, and that was that the person he was most anxious to please scarcely touched anything at all. But if she did not, Madame Bernstein made ample amends for her. She allowed no dish to pass her plate untasted; the connoisseur was apparent in her appreciation of the wines, while her praise of the cooking was volubility itself. From what he had seen of her, Browne

had been prepared to dislike her intensely; to his surprise, however, he discovered that she improved on acquaintance. Seemingly, she had been everywhere and had seen everything; in her youth she had known Garibaldi personally, had met Kossuth, and been brought into contact with many other European liberators. For this reason alone her conversation could scarcely have failed to prove interesting. Katherine, on the other hand, was strangely quiet.

The dinner at an end, the ladies withdrew to put on their cloaks; and while they were absent Browne ascertained that his carriage was at the door. When he had conducted them to it, they drove to Covent Garden. The box was on the prompt side of the house, and was the best that influence and money could secure. Madame Bernstein and Katherine Petrovitch took their places in the front, while Browne managed to manoeuvre his chair into such a position that he could speak to Katherine without the others overhearing what he said.

'You are fond of music, are you not?' he inquired as the orchestra took their places. He felt as he said it that he need not have asked the question; with such a face she could scarcely fail to be.

'I am devoted to it,' she answered, playing with the handle of her fan. 'Music and painting are my two greatest pleasures.'

She uttered a little sigh, which seemed to suggest to Browne that she had not very much pleasure in her life. At least that was the way in which he interpreted it.

Then the curtain went up, and Browne was forced to be silent. I think, if you were to ask him now which was the happiest evening of his life, he would answer, 'That on which I saw *Lohengrin* with Katherine Petrovitch.' If the way in which the time slipped by could be taken as a criterion, it must certainly have been so, for the evening seemed scarcely to have begun ere it was over and the National Anthem was being played. When the curtain descended the two young men escorted the ladies to the portico, where they waited while the carriage was being called. It was at this juncture that Jimmy proved himself of use. Feeling certain Browne would be anxious to have a few minutes alone with Katherine, he managed, with great diplomacy, to draw Madame Bernstein on one side, on the pretence of telling her an amusing story concerning a certain Continental military attaché with whom they were both acquainted.

'When do you think I shall see you again?' Browne asked the girl when they were alone together.

'I cannot say,' she replied, with a feeble attempt at a smile. 'I do not know what Madame Bernstein's arrangements are.'

'But surely Madame Bernstein does not control your actions?' he asked, I fear a little angrily;

for he did not like to think she was so dependent on the elder woman.

'No, she does not altogether control them, of course,' Katherine replied; 'but I always have so much to do for her that I do not feel justified in making any arrangements without first consulting her.'

'But you must surely have some leisure,' he continued, 'Perhaps you shop in the High Street, or walk in the Park or Kensington Gardens on fine mornings. Might I not chance to find you in one of those places?'

'I fear not,' she answered, shaking her head. 'If it is fine I have my own work to do.'

'And if it is wet?' asked Browne, feeling his heart sink within him as he realised that she was purposely placing obstacles in the way of their meeting. 'Surely you cannot paint when the days are as gloomy as they have been lately.'

'No,' she answered; 'that is impossible. But it gives me no more leisure than before; for in that case I have letters to write for Madame Bernstein, and she has an enormous amount of correspondence.'

Though Browne wondered what that correspondence was, he said nothing to her on the subject, nor had he any desire to thrust his presence upon the girl when he saw she was not anxious for it. It was plain to him that there was something behind it all—some reason to account for her pallor and her quietness that evening. What that reason was, however, he could not for the life of him understand.

They had arrived at this point when the carriage reached the door. Madame Bernstein and Foote accordingly approached them, and the quartette walked together towards the entrance.

'Thank you so much for your kindness to-night,' said Katherine, looking up at Browne.

'Please, don't thank me,' he replied. 'It is I who should thank you. I hope you have enjoyed yourself.'

'Very much indeed,' she answered. 'I could see *Lohengrin* a hundred times without growing in the least tired of it.'

As she said this they reached the carriage. Browne placed the ladies in it, and shook hands with them as he bade them good-night. He gave the footman his instructions, and presently the carriage rolled away, leaving the two young men standing on the pavement, looking after it. It was a beautiful starlight night, with a touch of frost in the air.

'Are we going to take a cab, or shall we walk?' said Foote.

'Let us walk, if you don't mind,' Browne replied. 'I feel as if I could enjoy a ten-mile tramp to-night after the heat of that theatre.'

'I'm afraid I do not,' Foote replied. 'My idea is the "Périgord" for a little supper, and then to bed. Browne, old man, I have been

through a good deal for you to-night. I like the young lady very much, but Madame Bernstein is—well, she is Madame Bernstein. I can say no more.'

'Never mind, old chap,' said Browne, patting his companion on the shoulder. 'You have the satisfaction of knowing that your martyrdom is appreciated; the time may come when you will want me to do the same thing for you. One good turn deserves another, you know.'

'When I want a turn of that description done for me I will be sure to let you know,' Foote continued; 'but if I have any sort of luck, it will be many years before I come to you with such a request. When I remember that, but for my folly in showing you that picture in Waterloo Place, we should by this time be on the other side of the Eddystone, en route for the Mediterranean and sunshine, I feel as if I could sit down and weep. However, it is *kismet*, I suppose?'

Browne offered no reply.

'Are you coming in?' said Foote as they reached the doorstep of the Périgord Club.

'No, thank you, old man,' said Browne. 'I think, if you will excuse me, I will be getting home.'

'Good-night, then,' said Foote; 'I shall probably see you in the morning.'

Having bidden him good-night, Browne proceeded on his way.

Next morning, as soon as breakfast was over, he betook himself to Kensington Gardens, where he wandered about for upwards of an hour, but he saw no sign of the girl for whom he was in search. Leaving the Gardens, he made his way to the High Street, with an equally futile result. Regardless of the time he was wasting, and everything else, he passed on in the direction of Addison Road. As disappointment still pursued him, he made up his mind to attempt a forlorn hope. Turning into the Melbury Road, he made for Holland Park Road. Reaching the studio, he rang the bell, and waited patiently for the door to be opened. When it was he found himself confronted with an elderly person, wearing a sack for an apron, and holding a bar of yellow soap in her hand.

'I have called to see Miss Petrovitch,' he said.

'She is not at home, sir,' the woman replied. 'She has not been here this morning. Can I give her any message?'

'I am afraid not,' Browne replied. 'I wanted to see her personally; but you might tell her that Mr Browne called.'

'Mr Browne,' she repeated. 'Very good, sir. You may be sure I will tell her.'

Browne thanked her, and, to make assurance doubly sure, slipped five shillings into her hand. Then, passing out of the garden, he made his way back to the High Street. He had not pro-

ceeded more than a hundred yards down that interesting thoroughfare, however, before he saw approaching him no less a person than Katherine herself.

They were scarcely a dozen paces apart when she recognised him.

'Good-morning, Miss Petrovitch,' he said, raising his hat. 'I have just called at your studio in the hope that I might see you. The woman told me that she did not know when you would return. I thought I might possibly meet you here; hence my reason for being in this neighbourhood.'

It was a poor enough excuse, but the only one he could think of at the moment.

'You wanted to see me?' she said in a tone of surprise.

'Are you angry with me for that?' he asked. 'I did not think you would be; but if you are I will go away again. By this time you should know that I have no desire save to make you happy.'

This was the first time he had spoken so plainly. Her face paled considerably.

'I did not know that you were so anxious to see me,' she said, 'or I would have made a point of being at home.'

All this time they had been standing on the spot where they had first met.

'Perhaps you will permit me to walk a little way with you?' said Browne, not a little afraid that she would refuse.

'I shall be very pleased,' she answered promptly.

Thereupon they walked back in the direction of the studio.

At the studio gate they stopped. She turned and faced him, and as she did so she held out

her hand; it was plain that she had arrived at a determination.

'Good-bye, Mr Browne,' she said, and as she said it Browne noticed that her voice trembled and her eyes filled with tears.

'Miss Petrovitch,' he began, 'you must forgive my rudeness; but I feel sure that you are not happy. Will you not trust me and let me help you? You know how gladly I would do so.'

'There is no way in which you can help me,' she answered, and then she bade him good-bye, and, with what Browne felt sure was a little sob, vanished into the studio. For some moments he stood waiting where he was, dumfounded at the suddenness of her exit, and hoping she might come out again; then, realising that she did not intend doing so, he turned on his heel and made his way back to the High Street, and so to Park Lane. His afternoon was a broken and restless one; he could not rid himself of the recollection of the girl's face, and he felt as sure that something was amiss as a man could well feel. But how was he to help her?

The clocks in the neighbourhood were striking eleven next morning as he alighted from his hansom and approached the door of the studio he knew so well. He rang the bell, but no answer rewarded him. He rang again, but with the same result.

Not being able to make any one hear, he returned to his cab and set off for the Warwick Road. Reaching the house, the number of which Katherine had given him, he ascended the steps and rang the bell. A maid-servant answered his summons, and he inquired for Miss Petrovitch.

'Miss Petrovitch?' said the girl, as if she were surprised. 'She is not here, sir. She and Madame Bernstein left for Paris this morning.'

ROSSLAND: A GREAT MOUNTAIN GOLD-CAMP.



HE much-advertised provinces of Ontario, Manitoba, and the North-west Territories in the Dominion of Canada have for years been regarded as promising fields for the emigrant and the small capitalist; and the yearly increasing yield of grain from the great western plains testifies to the richness of the soil, and to the plodding perseverance of those who have 'gone upon the land,' and founded new homes remote from towns on the outside edge of civilisation.

It is not, however, the writer's purpose to dwell upon the resources and wealth of these well-known and much-written-about provinces, but to take the reader farther afield to a part of the Dominion which is destined ere long to attract the world's eye by the development of its immense mineral resources. It seems strange that British Columbia

should appear to thousands of intelligent people as a sort of *terra incognita*—a mere name on a map.

Here we have a province with an area of some 383,000 square miles within a fortnight's journey of Great Britain, a country which, as its resources and wealth become better known, will open up a sphere of industry for thousands of people. Although British Columbia contains large and fertile areas of land suitable for various branches of agriculture, yet it is unlikely that the province will become to any large extent an exporter of farm produce, as she has within her own boundaries an ever-increasing market for all the agricultural commodities which are likely to be produced for some time to come. It is mainly the mining industry which is destined to bring this portion of the dominion before the eyes of the outside world.

Of course it is well known that gold has been mined in British Columbia for very many years, many millions of dollars' worth of the precious metal having been extracted from the 'placer' gravels of her rivers and creeks; but it is only quite recently that modern mining and scientific methods have demonstrated beyond dispute the richness of the gold, silver, copper, and lead-bearing lodes which traverse nearly the whole province from north to south, and from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean.

Lode-mining in British Columbia largely owes its present prosperity to the enterprise of our American cousins. A few years ago Southern British Columbia was less known and as little heard of as Central Africa; but the great mining states of Idaho, Colorado, and Montana each contributed its quota of pioneer prospectors, who, in the face of incredible hardships and difficulties, crossed the international boundary-line, and by their adventurous researches in the lonely mountain forests laid the foundations of an industry which is rapidly raising the country from the oblivion of the unknown to the front rank of the world's wealth-producers. Although the whole province is dotted with busy mining-camps, yet it is in the southern portion that the most rapid developments are taking place. Most notably is this the case in the Trail Creek mining division of West Kootenay. Here we find a veritable beehive of activity. Perched upon the mountain-side, at an altitude of over three thousand feet above sea-level, is the town of Rossland. Less than four years ago this place was practically non-existent; it has now a population of about seven thousand inhabitants, with wide, well-graded streets, schools, churches, good hotels, an opera-house, water and sewerage systems, newspapers, and in fact every equipment of a modern go-ahead city.

The whole town is lighted by electricity, which is transmitted from the generating station at Bonnington Falls, on the Kootenay River, a distance of about twenty-eight miles. This plant is, I believe, the second largest of its kind in the world, and is owned by the West Kootenay Electric Light and Power Company. The company, in addition to supplying light, also supplies power to many of the mines, smelters, and reduction-works in the district. Mining towns all the world over are noted for their rapid growth; many of them, however, have but a mushroom existence. Such, however, is evidently not to be the fate of Rossland, as the city is the legitimate offspring of enterprise, wedded to the proved value and permanency of several of the surrounding mines. The fact that Rossland is the terminal point of two separate railway systems also indicates that the city has come to stay. The Canadian Pacific Railway now runs its cars right into the town, and the other line connects with the great American trunk lines at Spokane in Washington Territory.

In a paper which the writer contributed to *Chambers's Journal* last year ('The Golden Kootenays in 1888'), a few figures were given showing the output of some of the mines in this part of British Columbia. Since the appearance of that article the output has largely increased, and is likely to continue increasing. The principal values are in gold, with a good percentage of copper; and the richness of such mines as the 'Le Roi,' the 'War Eagle,' and the 'Centre Star' are stimulating the development of scores of other meritorious mines, many of which will ere long take a place in the front rank of gold-producers. Many more mines could now commence shipping at a handsome profit, but the directors very wisely prefer waiting to develop their properties till they reach the stage that will yield the highest profit at the lowest working cost.

In the hard diorite rock of the Trail Creek district this is necessarily a slow and expensive task; but results will prove the wisdom of this course by the facilities gained for the rapid output of large bodies of ore. Many of the mines are largely owned by American and Canadian companies; and doubtless it is greatly owing to the success which has rewarded their efforts that the attention of English capital has been turned in this direction. There are many English companies now working mines in British Columbia, and one company in particular (The British American Corporation) is mining on a very extensive scale in the Trail Creek district. This company, which has a considerable capital behind it, has acquired some of the best mining properties in this district, and is spending large sums in their development. The company has retained the services of such well-known mining men as Mr Carlyle, late Provincial Mineralogist, and Mr McDonald, the late Inspector of Mines; while the local director and the financial manager are both mining men of wide experience in many parts of the world.

This company has built a splendid suite of offices for the clerical staff, also assay offices with all modern appliances for testing ores. One of the mines (the 'Columbia and Kootenay') under the superintendence of Mr McDonald shows immense bodies of gold-bearing ore; and I hear that it is the intention of the company to float it as a subsidiary concern.

In view of the immense amount of gold-carrying ore which is now proved to contain paying values, and the increasing number of mines approaching the dividend-paying stage, it is safe to predict that capital in the shape of money and brain and muscle will, at no distant date, place the mining industry of British Columbia upon a firm and enduring basis. From all parts of Eastern Canada and the United States come men of all sorts and conditions, and in most cases they not only 'spy out' but succeed in acquiring some of the fatness of the land.

In many cases a man can earn more in a day in British Columbia than he could in Great Britain or 'back East' in a week. No doubt many of my readers will say, 'What would be the use of my going to a mining country like British Columbia?' Certainly it requires experience to be a good miner; but the miners' wants open up innumerable avenues of profit for the small capitalist, in general storekeeping and many branches of business and trade. There is evidently money in circulation in a district where female domestics and hotel servants are paid at the rate of £60 and £70 per year, including board. The writer, who has sojourned in many parts of the world, has rarely encountered a country where opportunity, under careful cultivation, gives such a promise of an early crop of the fruits of enterprise or labour. In the uplands of British Columbia, though the snow lies deep in the winter, the cold is little felt. There are none of the blizzards and snow-drifts here which sweep the prairies to the east of the

Rockies; the snow comes straight down, and lies where it falls until the spring. A few warm sunny days lay the earth bare, and soon the mountains and valleys don their summer attire of multi-coloured flowers and profuse vegetation. Though the weather is sometimes hot in summer, it is not the enervating heat of the South African veldt or of the western plains of Australia. Altogether, the climate is very healthy, and no special winter outfit is required beyond plenty of warm underclothing and substantial footwear.

If any reader of this article should be seeking an outlet for his energies outside the Motherland, or who may be furnished with the means and desire to invest his time and money in some country beyond the seas, then, in the light of experience gained in many of the world's highways and by-ways, the writer would suggest that such an one could turn his thoughts in a more unprofitable direction than towards British Columbia.

THE LITTLE CURATE.

By J. J. BELL.



HE curate and Miss Edmiston were walking down the main street of the village engaged in conversation, which, being that of a recently affianced pair, need not here be repeated.

Miss Edmiston carried herself with an air of pretty dignity, made none the less apparent by the fact that she was fully two inches taller than her lover, the Rev. John St John. He was a thin, wiry little man, dark-haired and pale-complexioned, and was much troubled in his daily work with a certain unconquerable shyness. That he should have won the heart of handsome Nancy Edmiston was a matter for surprise and discussion among the residents in Broxbourne.

'Such a very uninteresting young man,' said the maiden ladies over their afternoon tea.

'So ridiculously retiring! How did he ever come to propose?' remarked the mothers whose daughters assisted in giving women an overwhelming and not altogether united majority in Broxbourne society.

The men, on the other hand, voted St John a good sort; and his parishioners, in their rough ways, owned to his many qualities.

'You're a dear little girl, Nancy,' the curate was stammering, looking up at his beloved, when they were both stopped short on the narrow pavement. A burly workman was engaged in chastising a small boy with a weapon in the shape of a stout leather belt. The child screamed, and the father, presumably, cursed.

'Stop!' cried the curate.

The angry man merely scowled and raised the strap for another blow. St John laid a detaining hand on the fellow's arm, the temerity of which caused the latter such surprise that he loosened his grip for a moment, and the youngster fled howling up an alley.

'What the—— spluttered the bully, dancing round the curate, who seemed to shrink nearer his sweetheart.

'Let us go, dear,' he said. He had grown white and was trembling.

At this juncture two of the workman's cronies appeared at the door of the ale-house opposite, and, seeing how matters stood, crossed the road, and with rough hands and soothing curses conducted their furious friend from the scene.

'Horrible!' sighed the curate as the lovers continued their walk.

Miss Edmiston's head was held a trifle higher. 'If I were a man,' she said, 'I would have thrashed him—I would indeed!'

'You think I should have punished him, then?' said the curate mildly; 'he was a much larger man than I, you know.'

Nancy was silent. She was vaguely but sorely disappointed in her lover. He was not exactly the hero she had dreamed of. How white and shaky he had turned!

'You surely did not expect me to take part in a street row, Nancy,' he said presently, somehow suspecting her thoughts. He knew her romantic ideas. But she made no reply.

'So you think I acted in a cowardly fashion?' he questioned after a chill pause.

'I don't think your cloth is any excuse, anyhow,' she blurted out suddenly and cruelly; the next instant she was filled with shame and regret. Before she could speak again, however, the curate had lifted his hat and was crossing the street. An icy 'Good-bye' was all he had vouchsafed her.

Mr St John was returning from paying a visit of condolence some distance out of the village, and he had taken the short-cut across the moor. It was a clear summer afternoon, a week since his parting with Nancy. A parting in earnest it had been, for the days had gone by without meeting or communication between them. The curate was a sad young man, though the anger in his heart still burned fiercely. To have been called a coward by the woman he loved was a thing not lightly to be forgotten. His recent visit, too, had been particularly trying. In his soul he felt that his words of comfort had been unreal; that, for all he had striven, he had failed in his mission to the bereaved mother. So he trudged across the moor with slow step and bent head, giving no heed to the summer beauties around him.

He was about half-way home when his sombre meditations were suddenly interrupted. A man rose from the heather, where he had been lying, and stood in the path, barring the curate's progress.

'Now, Mister Parson,' he said, with menace in his thick voice and bloated face.

'Good-afternoon, my man,' returned St John, recognising the brute of a week ago, and turning as red as a turkey-cock.

'I'll "good-afternoon" ye, Mister Parson! No! Ye don't pass till I'm done wi' ye,' cried the man, who had been drinking heavily, though he was too seasoned to show any unsteadiness in gait.

The curate drew back. 'What do you want?' he asked. He was painfully white now.

'What do I want?' repeated the bully, following up the question with a volley of oaths that made the little man shudder. 'I'll tell ye what I want. I want yer apology'—he fumbled with the word—'apology for interferin' 'tween a father an' his kid. But I licked him more'n ever for yer blasted interferin'!

'You infernal coward!' exclaimed St John.

His opponent gasped.

'Let me pass,' said the curate.

'No, ye don't,' cried the other, recovering from his astonishment at hearing a strong word from a parson.

St John gazed hurriedly about him. The path wound across the moor, through the green and purple of the heather, cutting a low hedge here and there, and losing itself at last in the haze. They were alone.

The bully grinned. 'I've got ye now.'

'You have indeed,' said St John, peeling off his black coat and throwing it on the heather. His soft felt hat followed. Then he slipped the links from his cuffs and rolled up his shirt-sleeves, while his enemy gaped at the proceedings.

'Now I'm ready,' said the curate gently.

'Are ye goin' to fight?' burst out the other, looking at him as Goliath might have looked at David. 'Come on, ye'—

But the foul word never passed his lips, being stopped by a carefully-planted blow from a small but singularly hard fist. The little curate was filled with a wild, unholy joy. He had not felt like this since his college days. He thanked Providence for his friends the Indian-clubs and dumb-bells, which had kept him in trim these past three years. The blood sang in his veins as he circled round Goliath, guarding the giant's brutal smashes, and getting in a stroke when occasion offered. It was not long ere the big man found himself hopelessly outmatched; his wind was gone, his jaw was swollen, and one eye was useless. He made a final effort and slung out a terrific blow at David. Partly parried, it caught him on the shoulder, felling him to the earth. Now, surely, the victory was with the Philistine. But no. The fallen man recoiled to his feet like a young sapling, and the next that Goliath knew was, ten minutes later, when he opened his available eye and found that his enemy was bending over him, wiping the stains from his face with a fine linen handkerchief.

'Feel better?' said the curate.

'Well, I'm'—

'Hush, man; it's not worth swearing about,' interposed his nurse. 'Now, get up.'

He held out his hand and assisted the wreck to its feet.

'You'd better call at the chemist's and get patched up. Here's money.'

The vanquished one took the silver and gazed stupidly at the giver, who was making his toilet.

'Please, go away, and don't thrash your boy any more,' said St John persuasively.

Goliath made a few steps, then retraced them, holding out a grimy paw. 'Mister Parson, I'm'—

'Don't say another word. Good-bye;' and the curate shook hands with him.

The big man turned away. Presently he halted once more. 'I'm'—' he said. It had to come. Then he shambled homewards.

St John adjusted his collar, gave his shoulder a rub, and donned his coat and hat. As he started towards the village a girl came swiftly to meet him.

'O John, John, you are splendid!' she gasped as she reached him. 'I watched you from the hedge yonder.'

'I am exceedingly sorry, Miss Edmiston,' said

the curate coldly, raising his hat and making to pass on.

Nancy started as though he had struck her; her flush of enthusiasm paled out. In her excitement she had forgotten that event of a week ago, but the cutting tone of his voice reminded her.

She bowed her head, and he went on his way. He had gone about fifty yards when she called his name. Her voice just reached him, but something in it told him that he had not suffered alone. . . .

He turned about and hastened to her.

THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW.

By VICTOR PITKETHLEY.



ABOUT three miles from the slumberous old town of Wells, in Norfolk, lies the village of Stiffkey, locally pronounced 'Stewkey.'

Mine host of the pleasant inn in Wells, at which I was staying, told me such strange tales about this place and its inhabitants that I was presently overcome by a burning desire to visit it. Thereupon the worthy landlord seemed quite conscience-stricken at the result of his own garrulity, and endeavoured to dissuade me from the enterprise.

'It's true they're a rum lot,' he explained apologetically—'a very rum lot. But I don't think, when you've seen it, you will thank me for sending you there. But there'—breaking off suddenly—'I don't know. I don't understand them. They have nothin' to do with us, nor us with them. They don't seem natural folk to me.'

In pursuit of information one meets with more of this curious, half-reticent know-nothingness, real or assumed. People seem to dislike talking about the place, and an intention to visit it is mildly marvelled at. What, one wonders, can be the explanation of this all but universal shyness concerning Stiffkey and all appertaining to it? Is it the residence of some bloodthirsty descendants of the smugglers of old, who kept watch and ward over the desolate mud-flats for the keg-laden luggers that softly grounded on the beach, afterwards secreting their haul in the marshes that stretch away to the sky-line hereabouts? Or is this village—never spoken of save with peculiar look and significant shoulder-shrug—some stronghold of the progeny of the ancient Danes, who scorn to mix with the peaceful, prosaic farm-hand or fisherman, holding themselves strictly aloof behind the barren barrier of scrubby sandhills that fringe the lonely sea? One can obtain no answer to these questions, and from sheer curiosity is finally impelled to set out along a narrow, never-ending lane, which is pointed out as the road to 'Stewkey.' 'It's a long lane that has no turning,' saith the old proverb, and the absolute veracity of this well-worn adage is forcibly impressed upon the explorer as he trudges along the furrowed, grass-grown track. The season is late autumn, and the first breath of impending winter is sobbing over

the marshes, while storm-wrack flits across the lowering sky. Stumbling over the stones and anathematising the County Council, one plods on, half sorry to have undertaken the trip, and wondering for how many more miles this interminable straight line of a lane will continue. And there is never a house, nor an inn, nor even a tree to break the eternal monotony of rutty road. At last, after what seems ages, the track drags its weary length upwards, and from its summit one catches a first view of Stiffkey. The village lies embosomed in bare-topped hills, and is bordered by thick-growing, sombre copses, the trees of which are just beginning to show their branches through the fast-falling leaves. Beyond these are rolling meadows, still exhibiting the mellow tints of autumn; while past the village there winds down a tiny river to the sea, which is seen close at hand, a study in misty grays and browns. The hamlet, warm with the time-softened tints of red tiles and brickwork, lies higgledy-piggledy among the darkening trees, the houses facing towards the various points of the compass, in the pleasing if insanitary fashion beloved of the old rural builders. A small church thrusts up its tower from the rear, and behind this is to be caught a glimpse of a stately-looking farmhouse. This, by its carved doors, now worm-eaten and rotting, and its mullioned windows, which look forth on the wallowings of odorous pigs and the squabbles of disconsolate fowls, betrays that it was not originally intended for a farmhouse. It is, in fact, Stiffkey Hall, built by Sir Nicholas Bacon, who held the office of Lord Privy Seal to the Virgin Queen, Elizabeth, and was premier baronet of England. This gentleman was the son of a rich agriculturist of Bury St Edmunds; but he soon rose above his father's sphere, and amassed so much money that he took to house-building as a sort of hobby. There are one or two old mansions in different parts of the country in the erection of which he had a finger; but his purse seems to have become exhausted soon after he commenced on his Stiffkey dwelling, for he never finished it, so that, instead of the old Hall being now the residence of some patriarchal squire, looking after the villagers with kindly benevolence, it is only a tumble-down farmhouse.

As one turns from an inspection of the Hall,

one is conscious of a change in the aspect of things. There is a brooding darkness over the hamlet which was not noticeable from the summit of the road. The warm tints fade out of the damp, moss-grown brickwork, the woods seem eerie and dark, and there is no sound save the dreary sighing of the chilly wind, the far-away heave of the gray sea, and the harsh scream of a bird above. The ordinary sounds of village life are entirely absent. Where are the inhabitants, or is the place deserted? Presently, however, one sees a group of sullen-looking men lounging round the door of an ale-house. One lifts his head to stare, but the others take no notice whatever of the curious glances they are favoured with. For truly they are queer folk. Every man, without exception, is red-haired, and the cast of their features is singularly unlike the usual Norfolk type. There is something shifty in the small, beady eyes, something fox-like in the long narrow faces and small pinched features.

Grovelling in the kennels, sprawling in the weedy gardens, and sitting on the doorsteps of the untidy houses are dozens of children, red-headed like their lounging fathers. Slowly one grasps the curious fact that the village is inhabited by a race of bright-haired Rufuses. Everybody is possessed of ruddy locks, from scarlet to dull brick-red, in curls and ringlets and long straight wisps. The explanation of this phenomenon, unique of its kind, is readily forthcoming when one has probed a little deeper into the ways of this primitive community. Intermarriage is the universal rule here, and is responsible for the half-witted children who swarm round the doorposts, the puny frames of the men, and the terrible evils that hang round the valley like a brooding curse. No 'Stewkey' man ever seeks a wife outside his own valley—probably because no bright-eyed lass in all the country-side would listen to his suit for one moment; nor do the girls of the place ever go forth to seek a husband among the 'foreigners' who dwell at the end of the long lane. Consequently all the bad points of the big family have been perpetuated and accentuated in the course of long years of intermarriage, and this hapless village presents as pitiable an object-lesson of the evils of the system as could be imagined.

We have seen the men and the sprawling children, whom a few old crones are making a sorry pretence of looking after; but where are the girls and the women, who should now be busy about their household duties? Where, indeed! Early in the chilly morning the girls and women might have been seen, with their skirts tucked up about their bare, scarred legs, and with long rakes over their shoulder, slowly picking their way down to the oily-looking sea that flings itself lazily on to the pebbles under the sickly light of an autumn dawn. Here they work till the tide turns, shovel-

ling the hard-won cockles into the sacks on their bent backs, apparently heedless of the biting cold of the wavelets. Then, staggering under their heavy burdens, from which percolate tiny streams of water that soak through their ragged clothes, they plod wearily back to the village again. Every able-bodied woman and girl goes away thus, day in and day out, to the 'main,' while the men loaf about and the old crones mind the babies. The children, when they can be coerced, are given such instruction as they can assimilate in the Board school; but they are unpromising pupils, taking them all round, with the hereditary taint of the family upon them—physical and mental depravity.

In one cottage, perhaps a shade more tumble-down than the rest, sits a hag who might very well pass muster as one of the witch-sisters in *Macbeth*. Around her are grouped any number of cradles, and in these are the babies of the hamlet, left to the tender mercies of this helpless old soul while their mothers are winning a bare subsistence from the treacherous sea, which every now and then claims one of the cocklers for its own. Fourpence a peck is as much as the dealers at Wisbech or Lynn will give for the cockles; and the hardest day's work, under the most favourable circumstances, will not produce more than a bushel of 'bluestones.' Sometimes by day, sometimes by night, according to the tides, the gangs of hard-featured, bare-legged women, in their bifurcated garments, scour the pools and hollows of the beach, reaping a scanty harvest of molluscs, and inevitably succumbing, sooner or later, to the rheumatism that is the lot of all these poor cocklers. Meanwhile the men idle about the fields, or drink and quarrel among themselves, invariably returning home for their meals, however, and to obtain from their Amazon bread-winners the money they have received from the dealers who come daily for the cockles.

As one dives deeper into the history of this lonely valley the shadow seems to darken and deepen. The morals of the Stewkeyites, as might be expected, are far from good; they seem to have little of anything that can be called religion, and their whole souls are wrapped up in the prices they will obtain for their cockles on the morrow.

Night is drawing near. The clouds are darkening, and a sharp shower sets the few leaves in the encompassing woods rustling loudly. The wind is rising in a shrill note of complaint, and the sea changes from slaty-gray to black. Slowly down the rough track, assisting their steps with their rakes, go the gang of women, bound for the beach, which the retiring sea—now touched with running ridges of white foam, upon which the rising moon casts its uncertain light—has left wet and pool-studded. A light gleams from the window of the ale-house, wherein the 'men' of

Stiffkey are enjoying their pipes and grog, while the women-folk trudge knee-deep through the chilly water, pushing their rakes along the bottom.

If the impression we have received be not strangely erroneous, surely the village is under the shadow of hereditary degeneration—mental, moral, and physical—of lost manhood, of poverty, of Death.

SOUTH AMERICAN INDIAN THERAPEUTICS.

BY A JAMAICAN JOURNALIST.



HE traveller in South American wilds has to face many dangers that, whilst interesting for their very novelty, are for the most part devoid of that element of adventure which to the average explorer is the very salt of travel. In this sense his experiences may be regarded as monotonous. But, on the other hand, apart from the question of material gain, which is the usual objective, those who go forth in canoes or afoot into the primeval wildernesses find many compensations. If, instead of the lurking lion's spring, the ponderous pachyderm's charge, or the flying dart of the dodging bushman, with the excitement incident thereto, one encounters nothing more obtrusively formidable than the harmless Howling Monkey, the buzz of the mosquito, or the flashing curl of the scared serpent; yet even these are full of interest to those who seek it. And at times the experience comes unsought and in a form that is none too welcome owing to the danger that follows in its trail.

Of all the dangers incident to travel in those far-away southern lands, none are more imminent than those to be apprehended from penetrating the malarial regions or encounters with the poisonous reptiles that abound in the forests. But, strangely enough, there are none more easily neutralised, and indeed even avoided, if one only knows how to go about it. For it is a fact that has been not infrequently noted by more or less responsible explorers, but which yet remains to be utilised by modern seekers after the great secret truths of Nature, that whilst these latter are exhausting the known resources of science to find antidotes for tropical malarial and snake poisons, so far without avail or even forecast of success, the simple Indian *peimans* or doctors of South America know and freely practise not only sure cures for the most virulent fevers or snake poisons, but also inoculations that give immunity against them.

The antidotes are all herbal, and in reality of the most simple nature, although their administration is invariably accompanied with an infinite deal of grotesque mummery. No less high an authority than Sir Clements Markham has testified to the efficacy of these Indian cures for tropical fevers and other diseases; and he also gives an interesting description of the careful training of the 'medicine men' in the medicinal properties of

plants, their university being the forest and their diploma a wand painted after the manner of a barber's pole. I have myself had a fairly intimate experience of some of these curious people and their really wonderful powers, to which I am specially able to testify. My experience, too, has been within the 'sphere of influence' of Great Britain in Guiana, and it seems that some effort might well be made to obtain these valuable secrets for the British Pharmacopœia.

I propose here to relate my own personal experience; but it may be well to add that I have met white men who had much the same story to tell from other points ranging from Guatemala in Central America to the Amazonian lowlands of Ecuador and Peru. So far as I am able to judge, however, perhaps the most successful 'medicine men' in tropical America are to be found among the San Blas Indians, possibly because theirs is the most deadly fever-breeding region of them all.

My time had come. The bucket of my health had gone once too often to the well-heads of malaria, where the swampy creeks that lead to Guiana's gold regions meander through dismal forests, and it lay shattered. Whether I had inhaled the poison, or received it through the tiny puncture of a mosquito's proboscis, mattered little. That was a detail not worthy of consideration. The fact on which all attention focussed was that there I lay, prostrated in my hammock, ravaged by an all-consuming fever, and with death knocking at the door—that is, figuratively, for the *benab* (wall-less hut) that sheltered me was innocent of doors.

Medical aid, supposing it to be of any use, was not to be had within a fortnight's journey, and in that time I should be lying at the root of the mighty mora-tree that, in mockery of protection, spread its towering canopy over a hundred feet high above our camp. We did not lack for quinine, but my faith in that drug had long ago vanished before the inexorable face of experience. If in trained hands, and in well-equipped hospitals, it had on more occasions than I cared to remember just then proved a 'drug' in more senses than one, what hope in its efficacy could I muster up who had no one to administer it properly, and where all the surrounding conditions were distinctly unfavourable?

But although delirious at intervals, I 'kept my head' otherwise, fortunately, and determined to make a hard fight of it. Within a few miles of

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our camp was an Indian settlement. I had had some doings with them, and won the goodwill of the headman. I sent one of the Indian hangers-on to him and asked that he would secure me the services of a *peiman*. The messenger left at daylight in the morning, and I was pretty bad then. It was midnight before he returned with my friend the old chief and the tribal 'medicine man,' who, it afterwards appeared, had made some difficulty about attending a white man. By that time I was past knowing anything of my surroundings, and in all human probability would never have recovered consciousness—in this world. My companions told me afterwards that I had already developed all the well-known symptoms of febrile collapse.

The *peiman*, however, having finally consented to treat me, had come fully prepared. He intimated that even he considered it a bad case, but went to work on me, administering internal remedies by means of roughly-devised but obviously effective subcutaneous and other injections. Then followed the inevitable process of nummery, which my companions were not permitted to witness, the *benab* being walled in for the nonce by blankets. One prominent feature was the rattling of dry gourds, which was kept up, they told me, for fully two hours incessantly, and at such a rate that one would have thought there were a dozen people inside the hut instead of the solitary *peiman* and his helpless patient.

When, at about three o'clock in the morning, the *peiman* issued forth and my companions were allowed a sight of me, they found me *sleeping* quite naturally, and bathed in a profuse perspiration, or rather sweat, which was already moistening the outer folds of the double blanket in which the old 'medicine man' had wrapped me from head to foot.

At eight o'clock I awoke, when a draught was administered. But of that awakening I have no recollection. I then slept straight on for twenty-four hours, the *peiman* from time to time administering subcutaneous injections. When I finally awoke there was not the slightest trace of fever left, although, as a matter of course, my weakness was great. From that time on improvement was rapid—far more rapid than one would have dared to hope for under ordinary conditions; and in three days I was able to be about, feeling quite my old self inside of a week, being then fit to undertake the long and arduous journey down to Demerara, which I made 'without turning a hair,' as the saying is.

And now comes what may be considered as the most remarkable part of this experience—albeit I myself have no doubt whatever that I was to all practical intents and purposes wrested literally from the grip of death, having reached a stage from which no medical practitioner could have rescued a patient. The *peiman* was more than pleased with the reward that I tendered him, and

before leaving our camp he intimated to me, through the headman, that if I cared to go over with him to the native settlement he would give me an inoculation which would be a sure preventive against all sorts of 'bush' (malarial?) fevers, no matter how exposed I might be to them, for at least a hundred moons—that is, about twelve years. If ever I did contract any such malady within that time, whilst the 'medicine' lasted, it would at any rate be of the mildest type.

It is scarcely to be wondered at that, in view of what I had seen and experienced of the old 'medicine man's' capabilities, it did not even occur to me then to doubt his power to inoculate against malaria just as effectually as our own physicians can against smallpox. And who would refuse even an off-chance of immunity against a danger to which one was incessantly exposed?

The inoculation was very simple. It consisted of stabbing gently into the left wrist with a bunch of exceedingly fine needles plucked from a hard spiny leaf, the needles being first passed through a flame, and then dipped into a black liquid of the consistency of honey. The spots punctured commenced to itch almost immediately, and in a few minutes the sensation was almost intolerable. Then a warmth spread up the arm, the pulse began to beat rapidly, the head to throb and pain rather disagreeably, and the membranes of throat and mouth became dry and hard. In half-an-hour I had developed all the well-marked symptoms of malarial fever.

At this stage the *peiman* gave a grunt of satisfaction and smiled all over his hideous face—for he was, truly, the most abnormally ugly human being I have ever seen, even for a South American Indian. He then gave me a gourd filled with a thick, slimy, and pungent mixture, intimating that I must drink it. The thing smelled vilely enough, but with a heroic effort I got down a gulp of it. Its noxiousness was unutterable, and only the earnest assurance of the headman, that if I did not drink it the fever would surely kill me, induced me to swallow the stuff.

A deep sleep of a couple of hours' duration followed. When consciousness returned I was feeling as well as I ever felt in my life, only that there were four small but keenly smarting blisters on my left wrist. These the *peiman* anointed with some sticky stuff, and then bandaged—and the operation was over.

Now comes the sequel. Was I fever immune? On the basis of the good old argument that one swallow does not make a summer, I should hesitate to make any such unqualified claim as that. I can only say that my after experience went far—indeed, the whole way—toward justifying the pretensions of the *peiman*. Soon after this adventure my business took me away from that part of the continent, but led me to an even worse region—the low-lying and swampy coast lands of the Caribbean and Pacific shores of Darien

and Panama. Thereabouts I underwent quite a considerable amount of exposure, especially on one particular trip, when we got capsized in a squall on a creek, got to shore, and spent the night under a clump of trees which afforded but scant protection from the pitiless rain that poured down all night. Of four white men in the party three got fever, and two died within twenty-four hours. The third survived, but his health was permanently broken, and he soon after went home to the United States. For my part, I came through that crucial test with nothing worse than a bad fresh cold.

This occurred within eighteen months of the inoculation. Subsequently I spent some six years about the Isthmus of Panama, and at that hottest hot-bed of fever, Colon, and never experienced a day's fever—not for lack of opportunity to contract it, certainly. Moreover, I was on several occasions in immediate contact with yellow and other infectious fevers, and did not contract them.

Medical men to whom I mentioned the matter pooch-pooched the idea of immunity, and warned me that it was a peculiarity of the worst forms of what is known as 'Chagres fever' not to attack the victim until he is out of its influence. Then the disease, germinating rapidly in another climate, seizes its victim and almost invariably ends fatally. It is better, far better, they told me, to have Chagres fever at home than abroad.

I left the Isthmus of Panama just ten years after the inoculation, and went over to Jamaica. I had not been there long before, sure enough, Chagres fever laid hold of me; and it hung on, more or less persistently, for nine months. My general health had been pretty badly run down by ten years' continuous work in a tropical climate; but at no time did the fever get the better of me, or even develop alarming symptoms, and finally it disappeared altogether.

Whilst not presuming to furnish data on which any positive opinion may be based, it does appear that these facts indicate the probability that the pretensions of the Indian 'medicine men' are something more than fanciful, that their power to cure and even ward off the endemic diseases of their lands has some more substantial foundation than the mere 'efficacy of faith' of their home patients, and that altogether the matter is one well worthy of the fullest expert investigation.

As a last word in this connection, it may not be uninteresting to quote the following extract from a minute that was recently published in the official *Gazette* of Jamaica, above the signature of His Excellency Sir Henry Blake, during a somewhat alarming appearance of yellow fever in that colony:

'In *The Land of Bolivar*, by Spence, published in 1878, vol. i. p. 110, is the following note: "A specific is said to have been discovered for yellow fever by the vice-consul of Her Britannic Majesty

at the city of Bolivar," writes the Consul General at Caracas. "An old woman named Margarita Orfile has discovered an efficacious remedy for the yellow fever and black vomit which has completely cured several persons after the medical men had declared they could only live for a few hours. This remedy is the juice of the vervain plant (*Verbena officinalis*), which is taken in small doses three times a day. Injections of the same juice are also administered every two hours, and the intestines are completely relieved of their contents. All the medical men here have adopted the use of this remedy, and consequently very few, if any, persons now die of these terrible diseases referred to. The leaves of the female plant only are used.

"A person now living at Moneague Hotel spent some time in Panama, where six years ago he was cured of an attack of yellow fever by a doctor who had spent fifteen years with the Indians, and obtained the remedy from them. Having been informed that he knew the remedy, which was a secret carefully guarded by the doctor, whose success ensured for him a very large practice, Lady Blake questioned him, and was informed by him that the cure was the juice of the vervain with white flowers, taken three times daily, while for three nights running a hot bath in which was steeped a quantity of the vervain with blue flower and of Guinea hen-weed (*Petiveria alliacea*) was taken, and a hot drink of limes and water administered, which produced profuse perspiration. The decoction was prepared by washing the roots clean, then pounding the whole plant, including the root, in a mortar, and boiling for half-an-hour in a small quantity of water. This information was afterwards repeated to me. The secret was disclosed by the doctor's dispenser, who was a Jamaican and a friend of our informant. It is evident that this is the same remedy as that mentioned by Spence in 1878."

DEATH IN LIFE.

So fair, so rare, and yet so soon to die!
Love's cup untasted, brimming full and high,
Life's music silenced all so suddenly.

White statue, with the hair of living gold,
Death is the same Grand Sculptor as of old!
His touch makes *marble*—passionless and cold.

The eyes *he* closes ope not night nor day—
The ears *he* seals hear naught that earth can say—
The lips *he* kisses never shall betray!

O prattler of the open heart and brow,
Sphinx-like, inscrutable thou liest now—
Doomed evermore to keep a silence-vow!

M. HEDDERWICK BROWNE.